

Virginia Board of Education
Campus Tour and Public Comment
Minutes
Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton
August 15, 2005

The Board of Education met in the auditorium on the campus of the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton, with the following members present:

Mr. Thomas A. Jackson, President
Mrs. Isis M. Castro
Dr. Ella P. Ward
Mr. Thomas G. Johnson, Jr.

Dr. Gary L. Jones
Mr. David L. Johnson
Mr. Andrew J. Rotherham

Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary, Superintendent of Public Instruction, was also present.

Mr. Jackson, president, presided and called the meeting to order at 10:10 A.M.

Opening Remarks:

Mr. Jackson asked the Board members and the superintendent to introduce themselves to the assembled audience. Following the introductions, Mr. Jackson made an opening statement, summarized as follows:

In order to understand the Board of Education's current and future actions on the consolidation, it is helpful to understand the background of why the Board of Education has undertaken the consolidation process. The 2003 the Virginia General Assembly included language in the Appropriation Act directing the Board of Education to convene a task force to develop a plan for consolidating services for the deaf, blind, and multi-disabled students served by the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind at Staunton and the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton. The language adopted by the General Assembly stipulated that the plan shall include an examination of appropriate academic programs, staffing requirements, facilities requirements, student transportation requirements, and individual arrangements necessary for all students currently receiving services. The plan must also include steps necessary to achieve consolidation, funding requirements and/or savings, alternative uses of facilities, and a suggested timeline for achieving consolidation.

As a result of the mandate of the 2003 General Assembly, the Board of Education established a Consolidation Task Force, headed by Mr. Scott Goodman, which made recommendations to the Board of Education. The 2004 Appropriation Act, passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor, contained language that set up a pre-planning phase for consolidation at a single campus of the two schools. The language stipulated that a feasibility task force be established to make recommendations on a suggested timeline of steps necessary to achieve a well-planned consolidation of the two existing schools.

Following completion of the task force report and the feasibility study, the 2005 General Assembly mandated the consolidation of the two schools by adding language to the Appropriation Act that specified the following actions to be taken by the Board of Education:

In order to provide improved services through up-to-date facilities as well as to achieve long-term cost savings, notwithstanding other provisions of the Code of Virginia, the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton and the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind, and Multi-Disabled at Hampton shall be consolidated into one school upon completion of any renovations, additions, or new facility construction at a site as determined by the State Board of Education with assistance from the Department of General Services. . . . The Departments of Education and General Services shall provide an update on the final location selected by the State Board of Education and on the planning and construction process to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Committees on Education and Appropriations and the Senate Committees on Finance and Education and Health by October 1, 2005. . . .

Thus, the past three sessions of the General Assembly have directed the consolidation of the two schools. In undertaking the consolidation process, the Board of Education has been assisted by the Department of General Services in considering Public-Private Education Act (PPEA) proposals to plan and design the consolidation of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton and the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton into a single campus. The Board of Education is also to plan for the transfer of students, programs, and services to a single campus. The location of the school must be incorporated into a PPEA proposal or a conventional capital construction project proposal that will be accepted, reviewed and adopted by the Board of Education.

The Board, under the leadership of the Virginia Department of General Services, received two proposals under the PPEA process. The Board of Education reviewed each proposal submitted for consideration and on July 27, the Board of Education adopted a motion to approve the proposal from Trammel Crow. The Board directed Trammel Crow to examine and report on the following options:

- 1) Renovation and/or construction of a new facility at Staunton;
- 2) Renovation and/or construction of a new facility at Hampton;
- 3) Construction of a new facility at alternate locations in accordance with the guidelines in the Department of Education Feasibility Study.

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Mr. Jackson closed his remarks by stating that the tour today is a part of the Board's efforts to stay fully informed during the review and consolidation process.

Presentation by the Superintendent of the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton:

Dr. Darlene White, superintendent of the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton, welcomed the Board members, the state superintendent, and the guests to the school. Dr. White then made a presentation that included the following topics:

- History of the school
- Mission
- School enrollment and divisions served
- Student demographics
- Staff demographics
- Summary of financial resources
- Overview of instructional services
- Transition and job-related services
- Community partnerships
- Additional special activities for children
- Outreach services Organizational structure of the school
- Major initiatives for employee development
- Clinical services

Dr. White made a special note that in November 2003 the school received accreditation Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Mr. Jackson thanked Dr. White for her informative presentation.

Campus Tour:

Dr. White and members of the school staff led the Board of Education members on a walking tour of the campus and several of the main buildings.

Public Comment:

During the public comment time on the agenda, the following persons spoke:

Dr. Patrick Russo, superintendent, Hampton City Public Schools

The Honorable Joe S. Frank, mayor, City of Newport News

Mr. Ralph Shelman, executive director, Peninsula Center for Independent Living

The Honorable Turner Spencer, Hampton City Council

Ms. Laurie Press, director, Parks and Recreation, City of Hampton (spoke on behalf of the city governing body)

The Honorable Charles Allen, Newport News City Council

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Dr. Judy Brooks-Buck, Hampton University

Dr. Carolyn Taylor, Newport News City Public Schools

Mr. Clyde Huey, executive director, Hampton Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Tommy Bennett, health director

Mr. Philip Everhart, Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, Hampton

The Honorable Flora Crittenden, former delegate, Virginia House of Delegates

Ms. Harriet Strom, community advocate

The Honorable Lionell Spruill, member, House of Delegates

Mr. Will Moffitt, Commissioner, Hampton

Ms. Dominique McLaughlin, deaf services coordinator, Hampton-Newport News

Community Services Board

Dr. Ned Carr, retired educator

Dr. Mike Canty, former director, New Horizons Regional Education Center

Congressman Bobby Scott, Us House of Representatives

Mr. Al Smith, member, Hampton Roads Coalition for the Preservation of the Virginia

School for the deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton

Mr. Pat Brown, parent

Catherine Tyler-Northan, community advocate

Mr. Donald Miller, community advocate

Ms. Louise Pair, community advocate and educator

Ms. Donna Stone, community advocate

Mr. Rudy Langford, community advocate

Mr. Joseph Gurley, minister and community advocate

Mr. Donald Fennell, community advocate

Ms. Myrtle Williams, community advocate

Ms. Rose McDowell, director, Rose Garden Adult Center

Closing Remarks:

Mr. Jackson thanked Dr. White and her staff for their time and efforts to make the day's agenda so informative and helpful. Mr. Jackson thanked the members of the audience for their patience and courtesy during the comment period and asked if any others wished to speak. There being none, Mr. Jackson declared the meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.

Submitted by:

Margaret Roberts

Executive Assistant to the Board of Education